

vision planning for the perryman area

a report on
smart growth and the
community planning process

november 2001



GROWING SMARTER

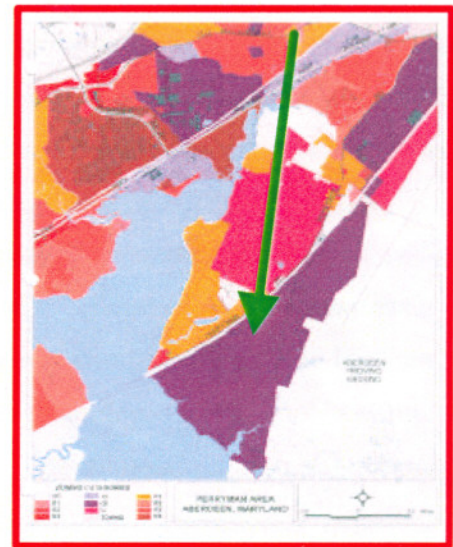
These workshops were made possible through support and funding from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). MDOT, under the leadership of Secretary John Porcari, is exploring innovative techniques for public participation, solving transportation problems, and promoting smarter communities.

SMART GROWTH IN ACTION – BUILDING SMART COMMUNITIES & PARTNERSHIPS



INTRODUCTION

Located adjacent to the City of Aberdeen and the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Harford County Maryland, the Perryman peninsula is poised for change. As this change unfolds, residents and business owners have produced an inspiring vision of what could be done on the peninsula. Harford County and the State of Maryland are guiding this unique process.



Entitled “the Smart Growth Vision Process for the Perryman Area” this vision plan by design involves all the stakeholders in an inclusive process that deliberately addresses all the issues facing the area. Many areas in Maryland have seen development that have had adverse environmental effects, begun to isolate many individuals from their communities, and would require the construction of extensive and inefficient roadway networks. This vision plan is to provide a means to avoid that future for the Perryman area. An alternate future has been proposed by the stakeholders in the community with a vision plan that embraces our advances in technology, communications, transportation, and environmental conservation and will transform the Perryman peninsula into an enchanting, diverse, vital community that serves as an economic engine for the County. The vision plan serves to unify the area by creating a focal point and identity for the community, provides transportation options, and conserves much of the areas unique environmental and cultural features.



SMART GROWTH VISION PLANNING FOR THE PERRYMAN AREA

VISIONING PROCESS - GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Planned growth, environmental concerns, and transportation options were emphasized as primary issues and served to bring the Maryland Department of Transportation to the community and sponsor the Smart Growth Vision process. Harford County has planned for the development of the Perryman peninsula as its industrial epicenter. Harford County's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance identifies Perryman as an area for economic development and employment. Development has begun based on that zoning. In place in the area are hundreds of millions of dollars of water, sewer, power, and fiber optic lines necessary to support development of an economic engine. The over 2400 acres zoned for warehouses and distribution facilities were beginning to be built out and were generating huge number of trucks, overwhelming the rural road network and literally scaring the citizens. While not immediately accessible to Interstate 95, and thus lacking the easy access desired by the many industrial uses, the area has not stopped the siting of significant development. The Maryland Department of Transportation and the citizens of the area suggested a different future for the area.

The aim of this process is to balance the quality of life, environment, and economic development in this Chesapeake Bay community. The resulting vision can help to create smart neighborhoods, address both regional and local transportation needs, encourage alternative modes of travel, protect natural resources, enhance long term economic vitality, improve appearance along roadways and promote collaboration among residents and developers.

VISIONING PARTNERS

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) took the lead with the County Department of Planning and Zoning. MDOT engaged the Governor's Office of Smart Growth, and the Departments of Planning, Environment, Business & Economic Development, Natural Resources, Housing and Community Development, its own Modal Administrations and the Transportation Authority to form a state team to work with the County and the community. MDOT also provided consultant resources. The Team directed the effort of explaining the benefits of a Smart Growth approach and what Smart Growth programs can offer and assisted the community in visualizing what smart growth means for them. This approach brought the multifaceted perspective needed to address the needs of the community comprehensively, and provided for early input from many agencies who wouldn't otherwise have such an opportunity.



The visioning partners sought to meet the State's Smart Growth Goals, including saving our most valuable remaining natural resources, targeting state resources to areas where the infrastructure is in place and saving unnecessary costs for inefficient infrastructure that supports sprawl. The partners also helped the community understand how land use and transportation investments reinforce one another, and determined the best mix of resources and objectives to help the County and the Perryman area.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The visioning process used a series of innovative and interactive public planning workshops that asked citizens to design the future of their community.

Steering Committee-meeting -May 24, 2001

Met with business and community leaders to prepare a planning workshop for the Perryman peninsula. This group provided insights about concerns of the community and served to "get the word out" about the process to the community at large. Some of the questions resolved by the Steering Committee included: What is your vision for the future? Are office buildings and corporate campuses preferable to warehouses? Would trees and landscaping make light industrial uses more attractive? Are there any affordable transportation options?

June 28th, 2001 - 1st workshop

Over 160 people attended to participate, examining pictures of existing conditions and contrasting development options to shape how the community might look in the future. Participants ranked and discussed various types and features and types of development activities (aided by pictures and computer images). A written questionnaire was distributed to further determine preferences for alternative economic development activities and transportation improvements in the area.



August 9th, 2001 – 2nd workshop

Participants discussed the history of the County's activities in the area. Specifically they learned about past and current plans for the area, current zoning in the area (and what that means), how the development process works in Harford County, and discussed future development of the peninsula. Participants also learned the results of the questionnaire from the first session.

August 23rd, 2001 – 3rd workshop

Participants mapped their vision for open space and parks, streets and roads, development types, pedestrian realm, parking and transit in twelve workgroups.

October 11th, 2001 – 4th workshop

Presentation of the composite/synthesis plan to the participants and general public. A pattern of community preference emerged reflecting a consensus on physical character, development intensity, mobility system and street types, and design for the peninsula.



COMPOSITE/SYNTHESIS PLAN

The consensus vision of the workshop participants is that the Perryman peninsula should be developed as a mixed-use community with two new major arterials for access to and from the peninsula. This vision is presented in the Composite/Synthesis Plan.

Conceptually the Amtrak rail line will separate the traffic loads from development. Development east of the rail line will be primarily light industrial and truck dependent warehouses having new access along the Aberdeen Proving Ground. To the west, residential and high tech development is concentrated in and adjacent to village centers enabling transit service and having new access to US 40 from a connection to Mitchell Lane.

Residents identified high tech campuses with offices, research facilities, single family housing in villages, light industry and parkland as the most acceptable land uses. A continuous network of public open spaces



and parks would integrate the natural features of the area with the developed areas. High-tech campuses are adjacent to the residential core to facilitate and encourage walking, bicycling and transit options. A number of intersections were identified as priorities for improvement to address current traffic problems. A new elementary school highlights the livability of the new community.

An interconnected network of internal streets will encourage walking and bicycling between the residential and office villages. Walking or bicycling reduces the number and length of automobile trips, minimizes congestion, and conserves energy. Envisioned is an area much more transit-oriented and pedestrian-bike accessible than currently. An extensive network of bike paths and routes would be extended throughout the peninsula providing access to both developed areas and key natural features. In addition, bus stops would be located regularly on the peninsula and linked to a possible new MARC rail station at the site of the former rail station on Perryman Road.

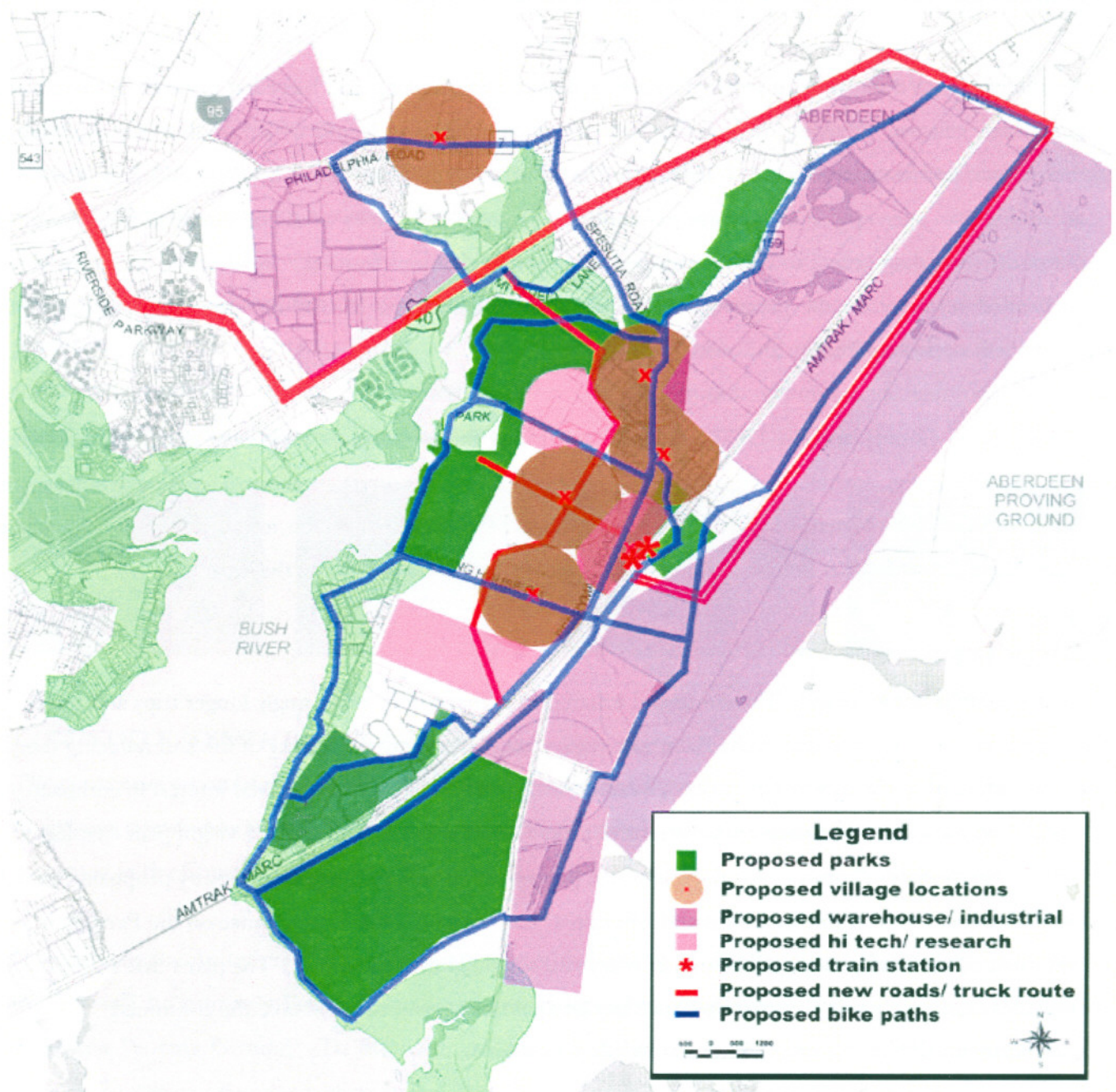
Currently the County and the DOT are closely analyzing the potential development under each scenario, and estimating the square footage of uses, number of housing units, number of future residents and employees. These estimates must be refined further. MDOT will continue to work with the County to refine these estimates and other necessary work to determine the feasibility of this plan.

SUMMARY

Each county is not an island. The continued urban sprawl that forces increasingly longer trips and traffic congestion for many who live in the Baltimore region are diminishing the quality of life and reducing the effectiveness of the automobile as a transportation mode. This has created renewed interest in compact “smart” communities with user-friendly transit linked to related development. The vision plan enables “smart transportation” options for the peninsula, potentially reducing automobile trips by proposing mixed uses at a density serviceable by transit and offering a “live – work” situation for those on the Perryman peninsula. This arrangement will be one of Maryland’s highlights in the future. The plans that resulted from this process are not just pretty pictures but an attainable vision that will take the continued commitment and hard work of all the stakeholders to achieve.



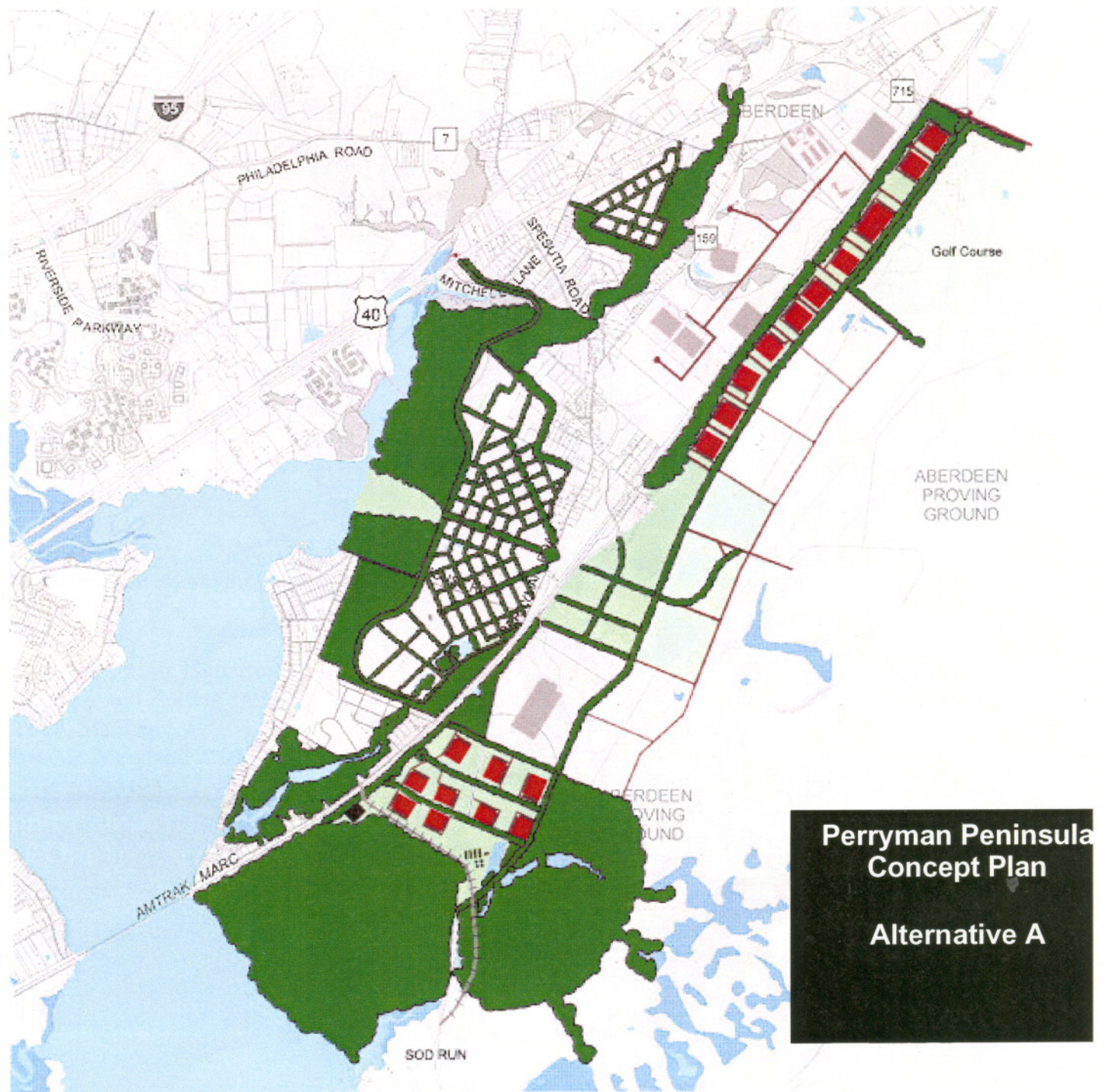
COMPOSITE or SYNTHESIZED COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE PERRYMAN AREA



This plan is a composite (synthesis) plan of the plans developed by twelve (12) community stakeholder groups who participated in the Perryman Area charrette workshop.



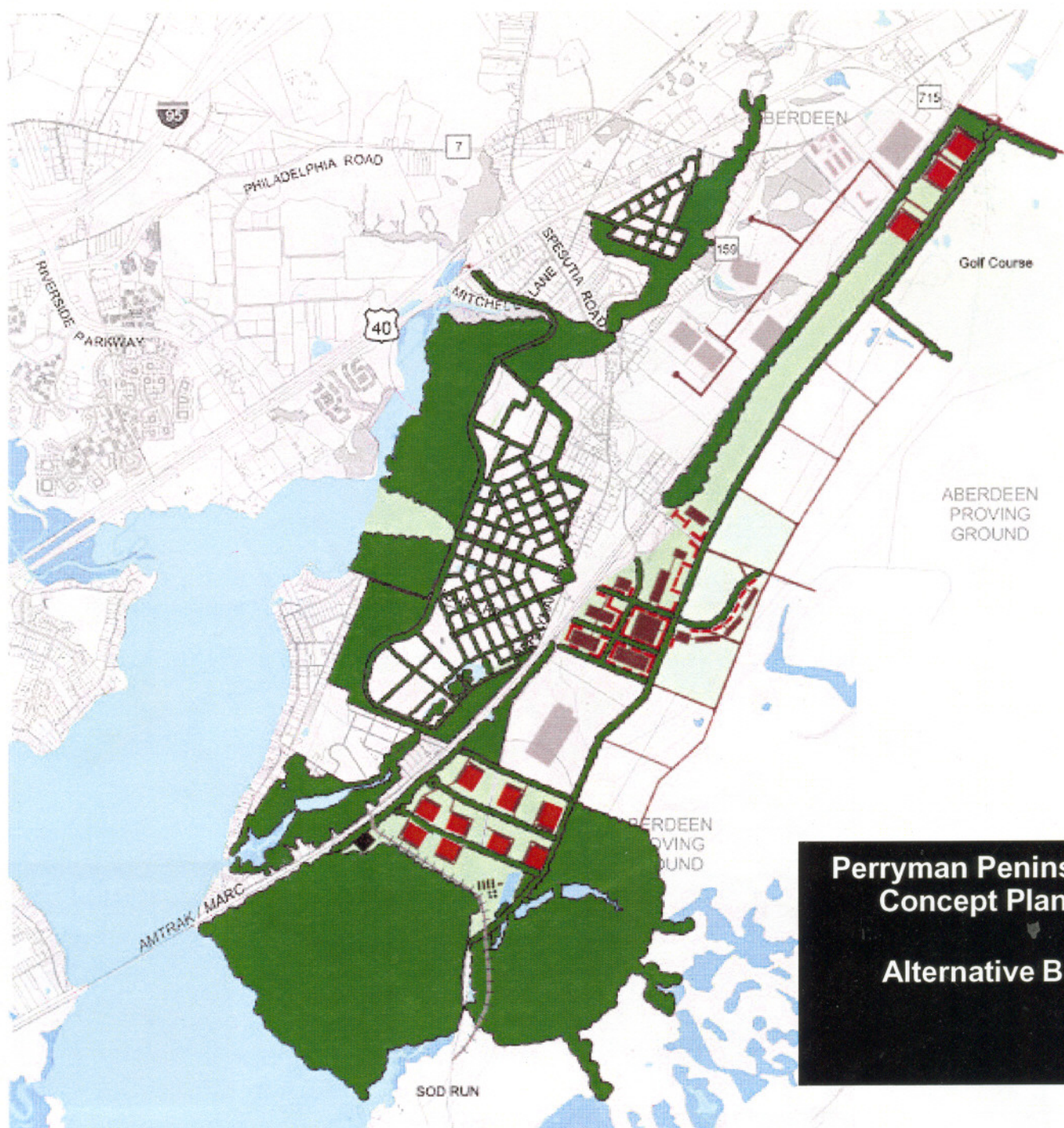
REFINEMENT - ALTERNATIVE "A"



This image is a refinement of the community's composite vision plan produced to display specific transportation, open space, and development options.



REFINEMENT - ALTERNATIVE "B"



This image is a refinement of the community's composite vision plan produced to display specific transportation, open space, and development options. It proposes the transfer of development from the well head area into a core near a proposed transit stop and village center.



THE NEXT STEPS

The goal of the workshops was to suggest future courses of action for state agencies, local governments, developers, and property owners - working in partnership - to realize the community's vision. Accordingly, this vision plan should be used by the County and State to guide future development on the Perryman Peninsula. Other key steps to achieving the community's vision include:

- Refine the appropriate mix of land uses, and determine general level of development.
- Excite the community about the Perryman peninsula plan.
- Make necessary changes in County plan and zoning.
- Complete project planning necessary to develop separate access routes for new truck and auto traffic and access to the peninsula.
- Adopt design standards needed to create meaningful places throughout the peninsula.

COMMENTS or ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please submit comments to or contact:

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